

Allama Mashriqi the Great - A Hero of All Times

On His 46th Death Anniversary

By Nasim Yousaf

“Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Untouchables, Christians of the Frontier Province have witnessed with their own eyes that one order from Khaksar-i-Azam sets in motion five million...Khaksar soldiers.” Al-Islah — Dec. 01, 1946.¹

Such was the strength of the legendary Allama Mashriqi — Historical documents speak loudly of Mashriqi’s lead role in the anti-imperialist fight for British India’s independence.

Mashriqi began his struggle early on and, in 1939, a defining moment took place which demonstrated his true power. In this year, Mashriqi came out victor during the Khaksar Tehrik-Government of United Provinces (U.P.) conflict, and ultimately, Sir Harry Graham Haig (Governor of U.P.)² signed a truce on Mashriqi’s terms.³

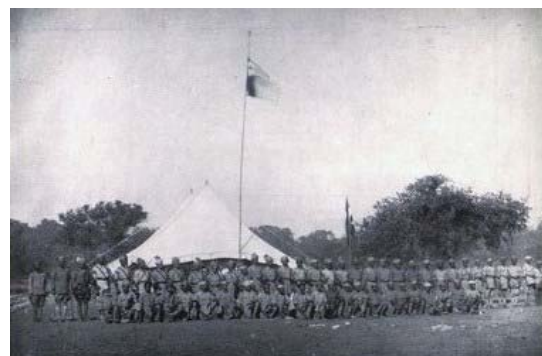
Right after this unprecedented triumph, Mashriqi established a parallel Government in British India. According to details published in *Al-Islah* (November 17, 1939), the country was divided into 14 provinces (with a center at Lahore)^{4,5} and names of provincial commanders were announced. Each commander (called Hakim-e-Ala)⁶ was ordered to ensure that his power was comparable⁷ to that of the British Governor in his respective province. For instance, they were to have their own warfare equipment and other paraphernalia. A directive was also issued to augment Khaksar strength by enrolling 2.5 million new Khaksars across India by June 15, 1940.⁸ Efforts to this end were taken immediately and startling results were witnessed.

With such events, downfall of the British rule in India was imminent. For the first time in the ruler’s history, someone was moving swiftly ahead to end their rule. In the midst of World War II,⁹ this created panic for the Government of British India. Moreover, this worried other political leaders in India who could see their own demise in the rise of Khaksar Tehrik and Mashriqi ending up with political power. Mahatma Gandhi rightly wrote in *Harijan*, “If independence is taken by force of arms, then the strongest power will hold sway over all India...They [Princely States in India] will each fight for their existence and succumb to the strongest who will be the emperor of India...”¹⁰ This mindset prevailed in the anti-Khaksar circles. Hence, leaders’ vested interests came into play, while the nation’s interest was overlooked. Owing to this, actions against Mashriqi were consented.



On March 19, 1940, after the Khaksar massacre, the Government arrested Mashriqi¹¹ and banned the Tehrik in Punjab. Discussing the Khaksar threat, Lord Linlithgow (Viceroy of India) wrote on March 28, 1940 to Sir George Cunningham (Governor of North West Frontier Province): “behaviour of the Khaksars on this occasion shows too clearly how potentially dangerous this organisation is.” A similar sentiment is also reflected in a letter Linlithgow wrote later on to Cunningham on June 06, 1941: “I felt quite clear after an exhaustive discussion in Council that there was no alternative to the action [on this day in 1941, the Tehrik was banned all over India] which the Home Department have now asked all Provinces to take. I have always regarded this movement as potentially a very dangerous one. It is well organized; well disciplined; and it works underground. There are not lacking signs that it aims at nothing [other] than Muslim domination...”

Upon release, Mashriqi issued instructions to the Khaksars to mobilize all resources to achieve the Tehrik’s objective. Apart from rallying the public and uniting leaders for a united front against the rulers, Khaksars also mobilized men in the armed forces. In fact, many of them were in the forces themselves (refer to Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad’s statement in the Central Legislative Assembly debates on September 23, 1942).¹²



As a result, on February 18, 1946, mutiny took place in the Royal Indian Navy. Two days after the rebellion, i.e., on February 20, 1946, Saadat Ali Ajmeri sent a letter to Mashriqi providing details of the mutiny as well as the Khaksars’ part in the rebellion. An extract of his letter in the Khaksar weekly *Al-Islah* stated, “...There are two or three Khaksars on each ship and five to ten in each establishment. They are in the forefront [of this rebellion]... Allama sahib’s friend ‘Chaudhry’, who is now commander, is also with them.”¹³

Around the same time, the Royal Indian Air Force mutinied in different cities. This was followed by another mutiny (on February 28, 1946) by soldiers of the Royal Indian Army Signal Corps at Jabalpur. Meanwhile, soldiers released from the armed forces after World War II and members of Indian National Army (I.N.A.) of Subhas Chandra Bose¹⁴ began to join the Tehrik.¹⁵ Other like minded parties also came forward.¹⁶

On June 08, 1946, Mashriqi called the Azad Hind Fauj Conference at Lahore. At the conference, Mashriqi said “after sixteen years of unprecedented self-sacrifices, we are now ardent to reach our objective as fast as possible, and within the next few months will do anything and everything to achieve our goal.”¹⁷ Mashriqi’s nationalistic zeal

and determination to overthrow foreign rule was well admired and a lot of soldiers joined the Tehrik during this time period. Among the I.N.A. officers were Col. Ihsan Qadir and Major General S.D. Khan.

On August 11, 1946,¹⁸ at Mori Gate, Lahore, Mashriqi made an awakening speech¹⁹ describing British Rule in India as “Trade Imperialism,”²⁰ which had exploited the Indian resources ruthlessly; Major General S.D. Khan was present here. Mashriqi’s speech, which was directed at 400 million Muslims and non-Muslims, shook people’s conscience and inspired them to not rest until foreign rule was ended. Soon after this meeting,²¹ Major General S.D. Khan sent a call to 800,000 released and retired soldiers and 50,000 men of the I.N.A. to join the Khaksar Tehrik.²²

These activities were not going unnoticed by the Government. Khaksar exertion to shake the pillars of colonial rule was working and the British were shaken by Mashriqi’s groundwork for the revolt. The rulers became highly anxious that there would be no way for them to suppress this movement.



Final preparations for a revolt took place in November 1946 at the historic Khaksar Camp²³ (November 07-10, 1946)²⁴ in Peshawar. Here mock wars and military exercises were held. On the last day, Mashriqi came and inspected the Khaksars’ readiness for the dawn of India’s freedom. On this momentous occasion, Mashriqi addressed a crowd of 110,000²⁵ Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and others. In his eye-opening and revolutionary speech, Mashriqi shed light on the self-seeking and futile politics of Indian leaders and gave an account of British exploitations of India’s resources. The speech sparked a sense that further abuse by the rulers would no longer be tolerated and their rule must come to an end.

With the tremendous success of the said camp, Mashriqi made a written proclamation (December 01, 1946) of the day which the nation had been waiting for and which would arrive shortly; he announced: “Idara-i-Aliya [Khaksar Headquarters] shall soon issue an order that in the entire India, four million [sources quote a range from 4-5 million members] Khaksars, side by side with hundreds of thousands rather millions of supporters shall march simultaneously... This moment shall dawn upon us very soon and that is why it is being ordered that a grand preparation for this historical day should commence immediately... so that British can clearly witness the day of India’s freedom...”²⁶

The said declaration terrorized the rulers and they sensed that soon the Khaksars would be marching towards Delhi and storming all important places in India. The rulers did not take this inconsequentially, and shortly thereafter in February 1947, the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, declared that power would be transferred to Indians no later than June of 1948.²⁷ — *Indeed! This was a crowning victory of Mashriqi.*

All previous political campaigns, such as Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements, as well as all Government parleys, from the Cripps Mission, Simla Conference, Cabinet Mission to the Interim Government, had failed. It became clear that these activities, sponsored by the rulers, were merely meant to show the world that the rulers were doing their best to help resolve political tangles within India, so that India could be granted her freedom. However, these were just ploys. Indian leaders were not working to resolve their differences and continued to play in the hands

of the British for their own interests. Had the British not been able to see the Khaksars' intent and drive, they, as usual, would likely have kept the Indian leaders engaged in negotiations while maintaining their own rule.



To ensure that no more games could be played, Mashriqi issued another order (March 1947) asking 300,000²⁸ Khaksars to assemble in Delhi on June 30, 1947. With this call, Mashriqi forever closed the door for further manipulation or delay to British India's freedom. The call to over a quarter million Khaksars to reach Delhi could not be taken lightly. In the eyes of Government and opposition circles, the Khaksars would advance on June 30th to seize political power. This generated a sense of urgency to transfer power. Therefore, Attlee's plan was put aside, and within months, on June 03, 1947, a partition plan was announced by the newly appointed Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten. This kind of urgency had never been needed nor observed. Importantly, Mountbatten gave no time to the All-India Muslim League or the Indian National Congress, and in fact, directed them to approve the plan instantly.

Within days (June 09), the All-India Muslim League (AIML) called its meeting at Imperial Hotel (Delhi). Khaksars came to impress upon Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to reject the Mountbatten Plan, as dividing the country would be devastating to both Muslims and non-Muslims and "a truncated Pakistan is betrayal of the Muslims by Mr. Jinnah..."²⁹ However, Quaid-e-Azam did not want to hear any opposition to his plan for Pakistan; he went to another room³⁰ and, according to Khaksar sources, informed Jawaharlal Nehru of the Khaksars' arrival. Police was ordered to arrest the Khaksars. *The New York Times* (June 10, 1947) reported, "...Khaksar demonstrators...were arrested..." *The Canberra Times* (June 11, 1947) reported: "...police used tear gas bombs." To make sure partition went through, Mashriqi was stabbed and arrested. *The Canberra Times*³¹ wrote: "Allama Mashriqi...was yesterday stabbed at a hotel where the Moslem League Council met."³²

The AIML accepted the Mountbatten Plan so quickly that it prohibited anyone from opposing it. Quaid-e-Azam backed out from his earlier stance (on May 21, 1947): "...I am...deadly against the partition of Bengal and the Punjab and we shall fight every inch against it."³³ On June 14, the Indian National Congress also accepted it. Mahatma Gandhi supported partition and deviated from his life-long stance. In 1940, Gandhi had said, "Pakistan can only be conceded on our dead bodies."³⁴ On March 31, 1947, Gandhi had said, "If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I, if I can help it, allow Congress to accept it."³⁵

The urgency in all circles was generated by the call for 300,000 Khaksars; all knew that if these Khaksars arrived in Delhi, political power would go into the hands of Khaksar Tehrik. This of course was not acceptable to any leaders, whether Indian or non-Indian.

In fact, Mashriqi never sought power for himself but wanted only freedom for his people and to save India from breaking up. He saw no issue with Muslims, Hindus, and other communities living together — he saw prosperity in such harmony and destruction in the opposite. Further, he saw no danger to Islam in undivided India — he saw no threat of Hindu domination, regardless of the fact that there were a greater number of Hindus in the country, as

power is not a matter of quantity (i.e. number of people) but is rather about quality (i.e. the brains). Case in point, the British themselves were a minority in number but had used intelligent tactics to maintain their rule; the British population in India, as per Gandhi, was less than 100,000³⁶ vs. 400 million Indians. To Mashriqi, the differences in the country were magnified out of proportion for selfish ends. Indeed, Mashriqi was unquestionably right! Division has not brought desired results, as were claimed by the proponents of partition.

Mashriqi was heartbroken to see India divided and was utterly crushed to observe people of the same nation slitting each others' throats, the madness of rape and abduction of females, and the ruin of millions of lives — this was one of the worst disasters in human history. With the blood of innocent people spattered on the streets of India, Mashriqi's conscience did not permit him to celebrate the victory that was indeed the crowning triumph of his own strenuous and painstaking struggle of seventeen years — Mashriqi took no credit of winning independence.

The question then remains: why has Mashriqi's pivotal and revolutionary role in British India's freedom — birth of Pakistan and India — been denied? The answer is simple: power was transferred to the Muslim League and the Congress, therefore, history since independence has been dictated by their men. Indeed! Pakistan and India's history as it is written is farce and has been constructed under the biases of contemporary politics. *If ever, historians get past this narrow-minded view, the history of Indian-sub-continent will be re-written to correct distortion and include all omitted facts.*



This article is written to remember Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan on his death anniversary. Mashriqi died on August 27, 1963 in Lahore. With the news of his death, the country went into a state of shock. His death was mourned worldwide by his supporters and followers. Businesses at many places in Pakistan remain closed. Well over 100,000 people, who came from all over, attended his funeral. The crowd was immersed in an ocean of grief and tears, and a lot of people were crying hysterically. "Some persons fell unconscious when they rushed forward in a bid to have the last glimpse of the late Khaksar leader."³⁷ Throughout, flowers were showered on his body. Khaksars fired 101 gun shots as a last tribute to their beloved leader. In accordance with Mashriqi's wishes, he was buried at the headquarters of the Khaksar Tehrik (Ichhra, Lahore), where he had started the Khaksar Tehrik in 1930 to liberate the nation from the yoke of foreign rule.

May God rest his soul in eternal peace. Copyright Nasim Yousaf 2009

The author's research focuses on Allama Mashriqi & the Khaksar Tehrik (Khaksar Movement) in British India. The author is committed to uncovering the hidden and distorted facts of the history of the Indian-subcontinent. The intent of his works is not to disparage any personality (ies), but simply to uncover the hidden facts of the region's history.

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- ¹ Translation from Urdu.
- ² Haig's letter to Linlithgow. November 08, 1939, pp. 380-4. IOL MSS EUR F125/102.
- ³ Barrister Mian Ahmed Shah and Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad represented Mashriqi.
- ⁴ *Al-Islah* November 17, 1939, Vol. 06, No. 48, p. 5. *Al-Islah* December 01, 1939, Vol. 06, No. 48, pp. 3-6.
- ⁵ Also listen to veteran Khaksar leader Sher Zaman's (author of several books on Mashriqi and the Khaksar Tehrik) video recorded interview by the National Archives of Pakistan; extracts are available on www.youtube.com
- ⁶ The appointees included professionals and politicians.
- ⁷ *Al-Islah* December 29, 1939, p. 6.
- ⁸ *Al-Islah* December 24, 1939, Vol. 06, No. 47, p. 5.
- ⁹ The war started on September 01, 1939. This was an autocratic decision of the rulers, and India was dragged into war without consultation with Indian leaders.
- ¹⁰ "Hyderabad." *Harijan* October 13, 1940. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 079, p. 292.
- ¹¹ No Khaksar or member of the family was permitted to meet Mashriqi. Even correspondence between Mashriqi and the family as well as the Khaksars was banned.
- ¹² Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad stated that there were 3,000 Khaksars in the Indian Army and 50 of them were officers.
- ¹³ *Al-Islah* March 08, 1946, p. 3 (Translation from Urdu).
- ¹⁴ He is believed to have died in 1945 in an air crash over Taiwan.
- ¹⁵ Mashriqi's speech at Azad Hind Fauj Conference. *Al-Islah* August 14, 1946, p. 5.
- ¹⁶ For example, Party Nawa-i-Islam. *Al-Islah* May 10, 1946, p. 5.
- ¹⁷ *Al-Islah* June 14, 1946, p. 5 (Translation from Urdu).
- ¹⁸ Akhtar, Sana Ullah. *Khaksar Tehrik Ki Inqalabi Jiddo Juhad*. p. 621.
- ¹⁹ In this speech, Mashriqi appealed to the Indian masses to come forward and help soldiers who were in poor condition after their release from the war. *Al-Islah* August 16, 1946, p. 5.
- ²⁰ *Al-Islah* August 16, 1946, p. 5.
- ²¹ On October 25, 1946. Akhtar, Sana Ullah. *Khaksar Tehrik Ki Inqalabi Jiddo Juhad*. p. 622.
- ²² Major General S.D. Khan also appealed for donations to help soldiers released from the war in their financial crisis and pitiable condition. *Al-Islah* October 1946.
- ²³ Khaksar Camp at Shahi Bagh Peshawar November 07-10, 1946.
- ²⁴ *Al-Islah* December 01, 1946.
- ²⁵ *Al-Islah* November 15, 1946.
- ²⁶ Allama Mashriqi, December 01, 1946 at 10 p.m. Printed by Punjab National Press (Lahore) under the auspices of Abdul Rehman Malik Printers & Publishers and released from Icchra (Lahore). (Translation from Urdu).
- ²⁷ Clement Attlee's speech in the House of Commons on February 20, 1947.
- ²⁸ Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D) Daily Diary No. 72, April 02, 1947.
- ²⁹ Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence Punjab, June 14, 1947.
- ³⁰ Recorded interview of a veteran Khaksar, Agha Gul.
- ³¹ *The Canberra Times* June 11, 1947.
- ³² *Ibid*.
- ³³ *The Tribune*, May 22, 1947. *Dawn*, May 23, 1947.
- ³⁴ *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 080, p. 488.
- ³⁵ Burke, S.M. *Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policies*. University of Minnesota Press. p. 57. Jain, Jagdish Chandra. *Gandhi: The Forgotten Mahatma*. South Asia Books. p. 38.
- ³⁶ Gandhi wrote: "You [British] are less than one hundred thousand in the midst of 350 [400] millions over whom you rule." *Harijan*, May 04, 1940. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. Vol. 078, p. 183.
- ³⁷ *Eastern Examiner* (Chittagong) August, 29, 1963.

The above article appeared in the following newspaper:

- **News from Bangladesh dated August 20, 2009**
<http://newsfrombangladesh.net/view.php?hidRecord=280613>
- **Pakistan Link (USA) dated August 28, 2009**
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